

## Thyroid Nodule/s

- 3 to 7 % of adult patients have a thyroid nodule palpable on examination
- Nodules can be detected with ultrasound in 30-70% of adults, and this increases with age
- Most of these nodules are not malignant and do not necessarily require any further investigation
- Many older patients will have foci of thyroid cancer which never cause any clinical problem
- Use of ultrasound for non-specific symptoms or screening purposes is not cost-effective as it may stimulate further unnecessary concern and tests

## Information Required

- Presence of Red Flags
- Presence of clinical features associated with increased risk of malignancy of thyroid nodule
- Thyroid function
- Previous irradiation if known

## Investigations Required

- Thyroid function tests (TSH and free T4)
- Previous imaging or cytology

## Fax Referrals to

GP Plus Marion

7425 8687

GP Plus Noarlunga

8164 9199

## Red Flags

- 🚩 Stridor associated with a thyroid mass - *refer urgently to emergency department*
- 🚩 Thyroid mass associated with palpable cervical lymphadenopathy or voice change - *refer semi-urgently to Breast Endocrine Surgical clinic*

## Suggested GP Management

- For patients with a thyroid nodule and abnormal thyroid function tests, refer to Endocrine clinic
- If the patient has a thyroid nodule and is euthyroid, refer to Breast Endocrine Surgical clinic

### Thyroid nodules may not require further investigation if:

- Thyroid function is normal and no local symptoms and likelihood of thyroid cancer is low
- Age, comorbidities or other patient characteristics make diagnosis of thyroid cancer irrelevant.

### If a Nodule is detected on ultrasound,

- the report should include characterization of the nodule(s) including size, margin, calcification, vascularity, features suspicious for malignancy
- if this is not stated in the report send it back and have it properly reported.

### Nodules with a benign appearance do not usually require FNA unless

- the individual has a statistically high risk of malignancy (e.g. previous neck irradiation)

## Clinical Resources

- American Thyroid Association Guidelines for the Management of Thyroid Nodules and Differentiated Thyroid Cancer 2016

General Information to assist with referrals and the and Referral templates for FMC and RGH are available to download from the SALHN Outpatient Services website [www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/SALHNoutpatients](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/SALHNoutpatients) and SAFKI Medicare Local website [www.safkiml.com.au](http://www.safkiml.com.au)

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